

PERS: Knebel, Fletcher

SOC 4-01.4 US (7 Days in May)

'SEVEN DAYS IN MAY'**Russians Say Fantasy
Is Conceivable in U.S.**

By the Associated Press

Moscow's military brass is publishing "Seven Days in May" and the Soviet press says it portrays "a real political situation which could easily be imagined" in the United States of the 1960s.

"Seven Days in May," a best-selling novel by Washington newsmen Fletcher Knebel and Charles Bailey, is a fantasy built around what might happen if there were an attempt by United States military leaders to seize the government.

Izvestia, the government newspaper, published a Russian translation of one chapter of the book last week, along with an announcement that the Soviet Ministry of Defense is putting out the complete work. Izvestia noted the book is fantasy but added the situation was easily conceivable.

As soon as the book was published in the United States, says co-author Knebel, Soviet newsmen perked up their ears.

Reached at his Florida home, Mr. Knebel said he was flabbergasted by the Soviet Defense Ministry's announcement and by publication of the chapter in Izvestia. Knebel recalled that some time ago in Washington he had been approached by a Soviet correspondent who had read the book.

"He seemed to be trying to pump me seriously, to see whether anything like that had ever really happened or how serious the threat might be," Mr. Knebel said. "I told him this was a piece of fiction, pure and simple, and the possibility that anything like it would happen was extremely remote."

The Soviet newsmen may have been unable to fathom all this.

It is not unusual for Soviet authorities to lift foreign books without permission, but it is unusual for the Defense Ministry's publications department to appropriate a work of fiction.